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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

United Nations Population Award

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on the United Nations Population Award, established by the Assembly in its resolution 36/201 of 17 December 1981. The report, which covers 1995, was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1982/112 of 26 April 1982 (see annex).

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ANNEX

Report on the United Nations Population Award (1995)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly adopted a resolution (36/201) on 17 December 1981 entitled "Establishment of the United Nations Population Award". The Award is presented annually to an individual or individuals, to an institution or institutions or to any combination thereof, for the most outstanding contribution to increasing the awareness of population questions or to their solutions.

2. The laureate(s) is selected by the Committee for the United Nations Population Award. The Committee is composed of representatives of 10 States Members of the United Nations, elected by the Economic and Social Council for a period of three years.

3. In 1994, the Economic and Social Council selected the following countries to serve on the Committee for a period of three years beginning in January 1995: Belarus, Burundi, Cameroon, El Salvador, Guatemala, India, Japan, Netherlands, Philippines and Zaire. The Secretary-General and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) serve as ex officio members. The Executive Director of UNFPA acts as the Secretary of the Committee. The Award consists of a diploma, a gold medal and a monetary prize.

4. On 5 December 1986, the General Assembly, during its forty-first session, amended article 2, paragraph 1, of the annex to resolution 36/201 so that an individual and an institution may share the Award (General Assembly decision 41/445).

5. On 26 May 1987, the Economic and Social Council amended the rules of procedure of the Committee for the United Nations Population Award accordingly (Council decision 1987/129).

6. In January 1995, the Committee elected H.E. Mr. Nicolaas H. Biegman (the Netherlands) as Chairman.

7. The following four eminent individuals served as honorary members in an advisory capacity to the Committee: Mr. Takeo Fukuda, former Prime Minister of Japan; Mr. Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, former President of Mexico; Mrs. Victoria Sekitoleko, Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries of the Republic of Uganda; and Mrs. Robin Chandler Duke, Chairperson of Population Action International.

II. THE 1995 UNITED NATIONS POPULATION AWARD

8. A total of 11 nominations were received for the 1995 United Nations Population Award from qualified nominators. After a thorough review of the nominations, and taking into account the views offered by the honorary members, the Committee for the United Nations Population Award selected Dr. Halfdan Mahler of Denmark and the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children as the 1995 laureates.

9. Dr. Halfdan Mahler of Denmark was chosen by the Committee for his distinguished career in public health which has included strong leadership in reproductive health, family planning and world-wide population issues. He served as Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) from 1973 until 1988. In that capacity, he established the Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (HRP) which mobilized the scientific and health community in a global partnership to help developing countries to meet the health needs of the populations, particularly in the field of fertility regulation. Under his leadership, WHO promoted the concept of primary health care with family planning and reproductive health as important components. Since 1989, he has been Secretary-General of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). He has made significant contributions to increasing public awareness of health and population questions and to improving reproductive health/family planning programmes. He played an important role in the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, including the preparatory meetings, and has helped to shape the new global consensus which emerged from those meetings.

10. The Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC), an Ethiopia-based non-governmental organization, was chosen for its efforts to create the social, cultural and public health conditions that allow women to exercise their reproductive rights, including the practice of family planning. IAC was founded in Senegal in 1984 to fight traditional practices that are harmful to the health of women and children, especially female genital mutilation. Since then active national committees have been established in 23 African countries. These committees have sponsored a number of activities including workshops, media talks, and training for nurses and traditional birth attendants. IAC conducts research and encourages programmes to combat harmful traditional practices relating to pregnancy and delivery, social and nutritional taboos, early childhood marriages and teenage pregnancy. The organization also promotes traditional practices such as prolonged breast-feeding and baby massage which are beneficial to the health of women and children.

III. FINANCIAL MATTERS

11. As at 1 January 1994, the Trust Fund had a total of $624,712. Income from interest was $43,601. Expenditures in 1994, including the prizes, totalled $38,235. The closing balance as at 31 December 1994 totalled $630,078.